

## To Understand The Critical Visual Communication And Its Importance For Graduate Students

Dr. Nutan Kanegaonkar

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Mass Communication and Journalism

[nutankanegaonkar@gmail.com](mailto:nutankanegaonkar@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

Visual communication is the way of conveying information through visual formats and explaining and understanding a particular concept. Visual communication transpires information to the viewer through various forms like the internet, books, newspaper, and television. The use of visuals is applicable for online and offline platforms based on the knowledge gap and need to implement visual communication. In the present era of technology and development, visual communication has acquired its own space and pace, and hence the researcher chose the current research subject. Here, in the present research paper, the researcher tried to comprehend the pros and cons of visual communication for college students based on the observations method. Reviews of the literature and other data were collected from internet, books, and scientific research portals etc. Findings of the study revealed that students who access maps, textbooks, graphical representations had acquired explicit knowledge above the complex topic. Here, visual communication has strengthened learning and understanding in students. Further outcomes stated that visual communication is the way to obtain proper knowledge through diagrammatic or pictorial representations. These visual communication elements help students to understand complex and multi-dimensional information or compellingly.

**Keywords:** *visual communication, graduate students, transmission of ideas, complex of information*

### 1. Introduction

In routine life, communication is critical, and an individual that may be a child, college student or adult, cannot spend a single day without any communication. In other words, communication is a task only limited to two individuals', where they can exchange their thoughts, ideas, concepts, or information. But communication is an event to receive information from a source and take appropriate action. In communication, there are role-specified elements present, and each element plays a different role. Let's take the example of the sender and receiver. Here, in communication, the person who transfers the message is considered as the sender, and the person who receives that message or information is known as the receiver. Communication is of two different forms, such as visual communication and verbal communication. Verbal communication is the forward and backward movement or flow of ideas, facts, instructions, emotion, and options. Here, the information moves from one person to another or within the group of two or more individuals. In contrast, in visual communication, the viewer sees the information and concludes or understands the concepts presented in front of them through online and offline format.

Here, in the present research, the research has focused primarily on discussing visual communication and its importance for college students. Visual communication is the powerful medium to communicate information, concepts, thoughts, and ideas in the current era. Here, in visual communication, one can present the information, enlighten the viewer and entertain the audience through images and text. (1)

Nowadays, technology is growing at a high pace, and it is a peak time to determine the importance of visual communication. Many companies determine the value of visual communication in connecting with customers, employees, audience through visual promotional advertisements. Because such visual promotion will take little time, but it will create a significant impact. With smartphones' development and increasing use of the internet over smartphone, tablets, and computer or laptops, everyone is moving towards visual communication. Specifically, colleges, schools, universities are trying to rely on visual communication to teach their students. Visual communication involves multiple options like graphics, signs, commercials, charts, colour bars, and many others. All these options are an advanced form of communication and to resolve the purpose of visual communication. According to Heskett (2005) (2), graphical images create "pervasive influence in, both positive and negative manner and they inform, direct, arouse, influence, confuse and infuriate" Visual communication requires time. Still, it creates a substantial and long-lasting impact on the viewer mind.

While performing the study, the researcher observed that visual communication is the oldest communication method (3). Here, the researcher observed that today's college students are occupied with numerous images and other graphical representations as a part of communication. To resolve the purpose of teaching and learning

skills, having a clear understanding of visual modes. For critical visual communication and its importance for college students, it must understand the visual communication types. Visual communication is performed in many different forms as representational visuals, organizational visuals, relational visuals, transformational graphics, and interpretive visuals (4).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem and objectives**

The process of learning and education is changing rapidly. It is mostly focused on advanced visual communication to offer proper and profound knowledge to college students.

The following research objectives support the investigation that includes

- To understand the pros and cons of visual communication for college students
- To understand the role of visual communication in envisioning information by college students
- To understand the use of visual communication in presenting complex information for college students.

### **1.2 Purpose of Study**

The present study was performed to understand critical visual communication and its importance for college students. Here, the researcher has tried to understand the pros and cons of visual communication for college students. Additionally, the present study also suggests that visual communication is essential in representing complex information to students.

### **1.4 Definitions**

#### **Definitions of visual communication:**

- Visual communication is one of the most exciting and potentially useful tools in education with the proper understanding of how to exploit its richness.(5)
- Visual communication is something which can be attained with the help of eyesight and display.(6)
- According to Costello et al.(7) (2012), visual communication is an area of study that “investigates the transmission of ideas and information through visual forms and symbol. On a deeper level, it also looks at the cognitive and affective processes that affect the way we perceive (or sense) visual stimuli”

#### **Definitions of verbal communication**

- Verbal communication is a sort of communication executed using language.(8)
- Verbal communication is communication performed through words, and it enables the opportunity for personal contact and a two-way flow of data. (9)

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Here, the researcher has reviewed the literature in focus to obtain the answers to defined research objectives. During the study, the researcher came across the principles of design; Costello, Youngblood, and Youngblood (2012) (10) stated that “ingredients used in making visual art”. Further, regarding the addition of visuals to the content to make the text-rich instructional product, Mayer (2003)(11) stated that “adding relevant graphics to words can be a powerful way to help learners engage in active learning. Overall, [one’s] view of the cognitive stages of how learning works can influence [his/her] decisions about how to design instruction”. Further, the researcher reviewed literature of Costello et al. (2012) (12), and found that “visual communication is an area of study that investigates the transmission of ideas and information through visual forms and symbol. On a deeper level, it also looks at the cognitive and affective processes that affect the way we perceive (or sense) visual stimuli”. Further, the researcher found that visual communication can be effective when content successfully interacts with each other. The researcher has gone through the literature available on the positive impact of conveying meanings to students, trainees, users, or another target market, through visual aids in instruction (e.g., lesson plans, module or unit-based agenda, weekly syllabi, course curricula, training products, or educational programs, etc.), it explains the extent to which visual communication has considerable effects on cognitive processing and active learning (13). Here, to understand the importance of visual communication for college students, the researcher has reviewed available literature. Here, the researcher has checked the history of million years ago in the stone-age and found that people used to communicate through paintings in cave’s walls and on ceilings. At that time, those paintings helped them to convey information. Further, the researcher has referred to another literature and found the document related to Indus Valley Civilization (3300 – 1300 BC)(14), where people used to communicate through various symbols written. According to Pearson, 2000, communication constantly happens in day-to-day life, and it is the process of sharing and understanding (15). According to Lester (2006) (16), visual communications is any optically stimulating message that a viewer understands. Further, Pearson 2000 stated that a message is a communicative idea, thought, and feeling in both a verbal and nonverbal way to a person or group (17). According to Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, people born after 1980 never engage with news and information in the same way as these industries have historically offered it (18). Wanger, 2008 said that “Young people need to analyze and interpret new media; they need to produce and create, and they need to understand the ethical implications of their work and the new technologies.”(19) Visual communication and related technologies are effective in communicating specific topics and processes to its public. Images are helpful to develop clear understanding through reading and used in multiple ways like words.

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Further, the researcher has reviewed literature available for agriculture, where he found that using visual communications, agricultural communicators generate meaning and transmit it to multiple individuals. According to Sadler-Trainor, 2005, (20) "Visual images are compelling in their occupation of the publics' time compelling of how we process our surrounding environments". According to Lester, (1995) (21), images can produce a more lasting impact than words.

Also, to understand the process of effective communication, researcher has reviewed study performed by Trumbo (1999, 418). According to Trumbo, language, visual, or words are the key things that makes science communication possible. He also suggested that to make the communication effective, it is essential to learn the visible languages of science and visual representations. (22)

### 3. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

#### 3.1 Method of research

This section describes the methodology used to conduct the research. The researcher has provided knowledge about the statement of the problem, objectives, and literature review. Here, the researcher has given information regarding the study explanation and how the population was chosen to attain research objectives. Here, in the present study, the researcher has performed critical observations to investigate the importance of visual communication for graduate students. Additionally, the researcher has selected acute observation, a fundamental method to carry out scientific research. The technique of critical observations is useful to study psychological developments, anthropology, modifications in behavior, and evaluation of the individual's behavioural changes.

#### 3.2 Population and sample

For the present study purpose, the researcher has selected the accessible population and was composed of graduate students. The research was performed the study on the graduate students. Among selected students, they belong to the age group eighteen to twenty two.

#### 3.3 Research material

For the present research study's execution, the researcher has performed a review of the literature and other data available on the internet, books, and scientific research portals.

### 4. FINDINGS

Here, the researcher performed a study to understand visual communication and its importance for graduate students. Through the present study, the researcher has shown that graduate students can properly understand complex concepts through visual communications. From this, finding one can conclude that this could be the prominent reason why visual communication is essential in teaching graduate students. Students with access to maps, textbooks, graphical representations have acquired explicit knowledge above the complex topic, and here, visual communication has strengthened learning and understanding in students. Further to attain research objectives, the researcher performed critical observations of a selected group of students and observed that –

#### Visual communication in envisioning information for graduate students

In the world of fast-paced technology, presenting detailed information is the challenge for institutes, teachers, and other educators. Here, to resolve the challenge, they can use visual communication and implementing well-planned images and graphics. Additionally, visual representation of information involves the use of charts, diagrams, tables, graphs etc. Besides, it requires several other visual interpretations of material to create the visual and add another dimension to the material; Well-designed visual create an entirely new path that resolves the purpose of understanding or "seeing". In search to understand the importance of visual communication in envisioning information, the researcher found one reference of Edward R. Tufte. According to Edward R. Tufte (23), for envision of information, bright and splendid visions available in the form of images, word, number, etc. produces good results and resolves the purpose of adding another dimension.

Here, the researcher observed that according to William Horton (2006) (24) "At its best, e-learning is as good as the best classroom learning. At its worst, it is as bad as the worst classroom learning. The difference is design". Based on William Horton's statement, the researcher has suggested that one can introduce visual communication and related elements in learning to represent the concept effectively and boost the understanding of students about subject information. Along with this, the researcher has observed that a webpage looks visually pleasing. Still, if it holds insufficient information and lacks visual appearance, then the majority of the time, it fails to capture the viewer on the page for a more extended page. Also, such a page develops confusion in the viewers' mind, and as a result, if the viewer is a student, it results in loss of focus. To support the research objective, the researcher has also provided one reference that humans are capable to memorise and learn better from images compared to text (25). The researcher also observed that words and images both help the reader explore a concept or fundamental ideas and depth of the subject. According to Nielsen (n.d.), "Usability is a quality attribute that assesses how easy user interfaces are to use. The word 'usability' also refers to methods for improving ease-of-use during the design process." (26) In online learning systems, students may lose their

concentration, leading to frustration, poor productivity, and learning ability. Nielson, n.d. stated that usability, learnability, and user efficiency depend entirely on visual communication.

### **Visual communication in presenting complex information for graduate students**

Visual communication helps to enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Here, to prove this, the researcher has taken the reference of (27) stated that the person who uses visual interpretations of information could improve the effectiveness of the presentation. Also, it ensures that the visual elements require a clear and readable presentation. In short, for the representation of complex and uncertain information, visual communication is essential. To represent such information, one can use graphics that allow graduate students to visualize that information. Here, while performing a research study, the researcher has found that students get access to information available in varied sizes, shapes, and forms as complex or simple. But when they try to summarize that information in a clear, elegant, and concise manner, it becomes tough for them to grasp it quickly without if it is available in text format. Here, the researcher has observed that visual communication is the way to obtain proper knowledge through diagrammatic or pictorial representations. These visual communication elements help students to understand complex and multi-dimensional information or compellingly. To match the research objectives, the researcher also observed that most educators convey a specific type of information using text solely, not a practical solution. According to Kendler, J.(28)here, to support the use of visual communication, the researcher has given the reference statement of Tufte (2006) (29) "Beautiful Evidence is about how seeing turns into showing, how empirical observations turn into explanations and evidence".

### **Pros and cons of Visual communication for graduate students**

Here, in the present study, to attain the research objectives, the researcher has reviewed a lot of literature on visual communication. Through study, the researcher has provided several arguments related to using visual communication in educating graduate students. To obtain clear insights, the researcher observed many studies had been performed so far to understand the positive impact of visual communication over text. During research studies, the research student concluded that the text is not that effective as visual elements.

Visual communication is a proven method applied in the education sector to teach visual literacy. It is an ability to understand and communicate using visual elements. (Riesland, E. (2005) (30). For students, learning any subject in a complex environment is difficult, and for better understanding, they need the proper representation of data through images, graphs, charts, or symbols. These elements are part of effective visual communication and allow students to code and decode complex concepts quickly.

According to a statement made by Phillip Yenawine (1997) (31) in "Thoughts on Visual Literacy," stated that visual literacy is a set of skills starting from simple recognition (what individual sees) to complex understanding on "contextual, metaphoric and philosophical levels". Further, the researcher states that using visual communication is possible to refine the concepts learned during childhood. For proof, the researcher has given the reference of Riesland, which states that for educating students and improving their understanding and communication through visual modes, they can use tools that thrive in increasingly media-varied environments. (Riesland, E. (2005) (32).

Visual communication prepares students to work in a dynamic, continuously changing, and demanding virtual world. Here, the researcher has provided a reference of a science textbook, where a switch from visuals that supported text explanation to that supported visual explanations. According to Kress, G., Ogborn, J. & Martins, I. (1998) (33)the above statement supports that graphics hold more information, meaning and central position than text. Further, to showcase the advantages of visual communication, the researcher has given an example of the Dual Coding theory proposed by Allan PAVIO. The approach represents the importance of visual information, where Allan PAVIO states that humans have one memory system for verbal communication and another independent memory for imaginal (visual) information.

Further study proves that verbal memory works for language systems, including auditory and speech, whereas imaginal memory is for visuals, graphics, and charts. Additionally, memory holds knowledge for sounds, tastes, smells, and nonverbal thoughts and reflections (PAVIO A. (1990)(34). According to Lohr 2003 (35), the involvement of two memories holds higher chances of learning than one. Further, to establish the importance of visual effects, the researcher took the reference of the statement made by PAVIO (1979)(36), "verbal behavior mediated by imagery is likely to be more flexible and creative than that mediated by the verbal, symbolic system" and it is due to the difference in the memory systems.

Like positive effects, visual communication holds some adverse effects. Here, poorly developed visuals offer fewer clarifications to learners and hinder the learning process. Visual communication must happen with the right match of text, instructions, and defining elements. Effective use of visuals improves learning in students. When visuals are not complementary with text, not consistent, it inhibits learning, as stated by Clark and Lyons (2004)(37).

Compelling visuals are an essential part of establishing good visual communication. The researcher has observed that not all studies related to using visual information give positive outcomes(38). According to data described in a research paper, the use of graphics improves decision-making speed and quality compared to other methods like conventional tables (39). Here, to understand the negative effect of visual communication, the researcher further studied that paper and found that graphics were not more effective in explaining information than traditional tables. Here, the researcher observed, the additional elements that improve the visual impacts of graphs like colour, design complexity, realism caused the detractions from actual comprehension (40). Visual information should not detract and confuse students. Clear visuals resolve the confusion among the students and offer proper clarifications on the concept.

### 5. CONCLUSIONS

Here, from the thorough research and observations, the researcher has concluded that visual communication is vital for graduate students. But the researcher has also stated that visual communication is essential for graduate students in certain conditions. If the visuals are clear and self-explanatory, then students can capture the fundamental underneath. Otherwise, improper visuals create confusions in students mind and distract them from the actual concept. Also, carefully designed visuals help students understand the fundamentals of concept quickly and keep them on task for a longer time.

### 6. LIMITATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the present study, the researcher has observed that nowadays, students are occupied with technology and executing studies through visual aids. Students become part of both natural and virtual worlds. Hence, to boost overall development in graduate students, it is better to use good visuals. The usefulness or impact of visuals, it is essential to consider several things. The first thing involves the creation of graphics, the way visuals are used to convey the information. Also, it is essential to know that whether visuals are creating any impact on the audience. Visuals are added by considering the audience type, age, and motto for making effective visual communication understand the associated risk and uncertainty. In the present paper, the researcher observed mixed results as positive and negative hence, and further research is necessary to obtain the firm outcome.

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